Advisory Team: Accountability Task Force

MINUTES   MARCH 25, 2016   9:00AM-12:00PM   OFFICE OF THE NH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ADVISORY TEAM LEADS	Scott Mantie, Paul Leather, and Saundra MacDonald, NH DOE
CONSULTANTS	Scott Marion, Susan Lyons, and Juan D'Brot, Center for Assessment
NOTE TAKER	Susan Lyons and Juan D'Brot, Center for Assessment
ATTENDEES	Virginia Barry, Jim O'Rourke, Bill Duncan, Lorainne Tecconi-Moore, Nancy Stiles, Nate Greenburg, Julie Heon, Craig Conners, Donna Crook, Irv Richardson, Winfried Feneberg, Terri Forsten, Mike Hopkins, Mike Jette, Mary Moriarty, Fran Gonsalves, Tammy Davis, George Shea, Mark Conrad, Rick Ladd, Mary Wilson, Rob Malay, Dave Backler, David Juvet, Patrick Conners, Natasha Kolehmainen
OBSERVERS	Keith Burke, Lauren Heiter, Aaron Hughes, Susan Morgan, Donna Dubey, Dina Rabuck, Irene Koffink
PRE-READ MATERIALS	ESSA Accountability in NH_021216_Marion.pdf

DISCUSSION	

OBJECTIVES FOR MEETING:
1. Outlining the charge to the Task Force.
2. Creating a shared understanding of ESSA accountability requirements.
3. Begin the process of defining the goals for a NH ESSA accountability system.

9:00 Welcome, introductions, and charge to the Task Force
- ✓ Scott Mantie, NH DOE
  - o Task Force members will introduce themselves and describe their interest in helping to create a new ESSA-compliant accountability system
  - o Dr. Mantie will clarify the charge to the Task Force in providing advice to the NH DOE in helping to craft the ESSA accountability system

Discussion: Commissioner Virginia Barry kicked off the meeting by speaking to New Hampshire's role of leading the nation. She noted that the current re-authorization of ESEA, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), reflects much of the structure that has been built and tested here in New Hampshire. The Accountability Task Force has an incredible, once in a lifetime opportunity to build an accountability system that really makes a difference and sends a clear message to our educators and our communities.

Introductions then proceeded around the room to all of the meeting leads and task force members.

9:30 Overview of the assessment and accountability provisions of ESSA
- ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
  We will provide an overview of the statutory requirements for the design of an ESSA accountability system and engage in a full-group discussion of some of the key issues.

Discussion: Before Scott Marion presented, there was a bit of discussion about the timeline for the new accountability system. The question was, "will the new system be phased in by 2017-2018 or is it expected that the new system will be fully implemented and complete by the beginning of that academic year?" Deputy Commissioner Paul Leather responded by says that we are going to plan to move forward as directly as we can into this new world, but there are still many unknowns as we will not likely see regulations until the end of this calendar year and the new president in November may bring changes. The intention of the NHDOE is to go as far as we can to design a new system in a thoughtful manner, keeping in mind we do not want to place the cart in front of the horse and have to double-back. The intent is to put some policies and processes in place that are good bets for New Hampshire.

Scott Marion then provided an overview of the new law, ESSA. Marion briefly reviewed the orderly transition provision, the state plan, the district plan, and key provisions including the requirement of equitable distribution of teacher quality. Marion then spent the majority of the time for this agenda item reviewing the new assessment and accountability requirements in ESSA. New assessment provisions include more flexibility in high school assessment, and options for interim or through-course assessment. The slide deck used for this presentation can be found on the NH DOE's ESSA webpage under Accountability Task Force.

Marion introduced the accountability implications of the law by first discussing the task force's role in considering the potential unintended consequences of any decisions we make. A key part of accountability design is goal setting. The state has to set status and improvement goals for academic achievement, graduation rate, and sub-groups that are behind. The type and nature of the improvement goals are not yet fully clear. Note: all state plans will undergo peer review, for which the requirements are unknown. A challenge we face as a task force is looking at our system through the lens of peer review.

Under ESSA, there are five types of accountability indicators: 1) academic achievement (e.g., though proficiency has to be reported, we could build an accountability system that takes into account the scale score variability), another valid and reliable indicator of academics (e.g., growth or gap reduction), graduation rate (i.e., using the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate), English language proficiency (this will likely present a huge challenge because only a small subset of schools has substantial populations of these students, but we can think of ways to incentivize schools to move students out of ELP, and rewards schools for moving out), and a fifth indicator, an indicator of school quality or success that meaningfully differentiates and is valid, reliable, and comparable. As far as identifying priority and focus schools, states still have to identify the lowest performing schools at least once every three years. We have some role in defining this, but we must look at low performance, HS graduate rates less than 67%, and schools with the low performing subgroups.

Marion suggested that the task force has an opportunity to move away from the old conjunctive systems prescribed under NCLB, and to think about how a compensatory model might work. This approach may limit the hurdles to reaching the most essential accountability indicators. Before moving on to larger group discussion, Scott also introduced the Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority in the law (i.e., based on the New Hampshire pilot - PACE).

The new accountability requirements and the introduction of the Demonstration Authority sparked a discussion among the task force members and leads about the role of district-level flexibility in the new design for the NH accountability system. Scott Marion clarifies that the requirements call for a single statewide system, unless the state is operating under the Demonstration Authority. Paul Leather reminded the task force members of the need for comparable indicators for the purpose of making determinations about how schools are performing. To wrap up this agenda item, Marion briefly described the process through which system design recommendations will be made and how those decisions will influence policy.

10:15   Parsing the ESSA accountability requirements
- ✓ Scott Mantie, NH DOE
  - ○ We will engage in a "close-reading" activity to dig into the actual statute to clarify what we know now, what we need to know, and what questions we have as we move into an accountability system design.

Discussion: Due to lack of time, Scott Marion assigned this task as homework to be discussed at the next task force meeting.

11:00   Discussion of the goals of the NH ESSA Accountability System
- ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
  - ○ It is critical to clarify the goals, purposes, and intended uses of the system so that we have a solid touchstone from which to base our design decisions. We will engage in a process to begin this important work. This work will continue into the next meeting, but it is important to get Task Force members to begin this clarification process.

Discussion: This discussion of goals is a two-phase activity that will continue on April 15th in a deeper way. Marion introduces this activity by emphasizing that we cannot talk about the goals of an accountability system before we talk about the goals of the education system. At some level, we all want the same good things for our students, but once we get to the details, we do not always agree. In order to identify some of these finer-grained goals, we spent twenty minutes individually responding to the following questions:

1. Describe your vision for the prototypical NH high school graduate in five year? What kinds of knowledge, skills, and attitudes do they process? Be specific.
2. Given this vision, what is your vision for NH Schools? How should they be structured? What kinds of teaching and learning will we see? What types of content and skills will students be learning?
3. How can a statewide reporting and accountability system help realize your vision? What things should the system incentivize?
4. How can a statewide reporting and accountability system help hinder your vision? What negative consequences do we need to watch?

Task force members then shared their responses with a partner and wrote down key ideas on post-it notes to share on large pieces of paper at the front of the room. The complete, post-it note task force responses are included in Appendix A.

Student Vision: Key works for student vision include: self-directed toward building individual self-worth and actualization, complex problem solving, collaboration, preparedness for college and career, content and technology skills, integration or synthesis of knowledge, citizenship (community and global). Susan Lyons summarized these comments as combining content knowledge and literacy with 21st century skills to be prepared for success in a self-chosen future path. Key words for the school vision included: personalized learning, competency-based, project-based learning, learning progressions, move-on when ready, updated physical space to reflect teaching and learning. Scott Marion commented that the collective vision for schools nicely reflects the student vision.

Accountability Incentives: Keywords associated with the task force's accountability incentives include: emphasize growth, flexible for students and districts, performance assessments, useful for instruction and timely (embedded). Juan D'Brot summarized the responses to the question about how an accountability system can incentivize the types of behaviors/actions that we want to see in the educational system. He noted that task force members indicated that they wanted the accountability system to actually inform practice and learning, before assigning a grade or outcome. D'Brot acknowledged the existence of two accountability systems, which should be aligned: an internal (about instruction) and an external (about reporting) one.

Potential Negative Consequences and Reporting: Keywords for the potential negative consequences brought forth by the task force include: too much emphasis on academic content knowledge in math and reading, misrepresentation of subgroups, punitive in nature causing lack of public support and/or confusion about priorities, lack of flexibility for capturing complexity associated with meeting the needs of all students. Marion commented that these concerns are common in

accountability system; our challenge is to find the balance between measuring everything and focusing too much on isolated indicators. Marion briefly introduced the idea of a dashboard, where multiple indicators could be presented, and not easily combined.

11:45   Next steps

Discussion: The next meeting will focus on outlining a theory of action for the accountability system. The Center for Assessment will send some advanced reading on accountability system design and theories of action. The meeting wrapped up with closing remarks from Deputy Commissioner Paul Leather and Commissioner Virginia Barry. They both re-emphasized that this is an exciting opportunity to think about a different theory of action (than the one previously driving the NCLB accountability systems). In New Hampshire we are learning so much and thinking about students and instruction differently. This new accountability model has to allow itself to change and be organic. There are a lot of great things going on in the state and we have to keep being open-minded.

Noon   Adjourn

CONCLUSIONS	

Please come prepared to the next meeting having read the materials that will be shared with you by Friday, April 1st. Throughout this process, the leads of the task force will work diligently to prepare materials that represent the open and ambitious vision we have here in New Hampshire. Thank you to the task force members in advance for your time energy.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Send advance reading to task force members (Elmore, theories of action, accountability system design, etc.)	Scott Marion	April 1
Read new materials and accountability section of ESSA	Task Force Members	April 15

Appendix A: Task Force Members' Visions for our Students, Schools, and Accountability

Student Vision
- Financially literate
- Able to earn a living in a manner that is meaningful to them, be connected to their community, aspire to own "personal greatness"
- Need to be ready to compete in a global economy
- Focus on student agency, ownership of their learning, clear path set by student to college and career, ability to seek knowledge and answer difficult questions, prepared for jobs that do not exist yet, authentic tasks for student
- Create personal, clear goals for 4-6 years after secondary education
- Attitudes—positive self-worth and continued growth and awareness in cultural and societal acceptance and tolerance
- Communication skills (in person, digital tech methods)
- Individual and group problem-solving skills
- Self-motivation, study skills
- Understanding post-secondary system
- Strong problem solving skills, understanding of global contents, appreciation for community, strong interpersonal skills, appreciation of arts and culture
- Independent critical thinkers, learn through interests, know how to obtain resources, discern, communicate well
- Be able to collaborate, self-directed, act as a good citizen—civic responsibility, community service
- Possess strong leadership skills, tech savvy, communicate effectively, ready to collaborate
- Flexible thinkers equipped with the ability to design and engineer solutions to complex problems
- Ability to listen to divergent points of view and evaluate based on facts
- Attitudes: resilience, growth mindset
- Listen actively to respond/act
- Maximizing learning with technology
- Be open to new learning ideas—life-long
- Effective communicator, effective problem solver, civic minded, has necessary content knowledge, long-long learner, wellness (social, emotional, physical), ability to collaborate, self-direction, critical thinking
- Communicates, critical thinker, collaborates, creative
- Effectively communicate in written and oral formats
- Ability to analyze and synthesize information
- Ability to think on their own
- Knowledge of other languages including but not limited to foreign languages, sing/braille, programming
- Key cognitive strategies: intellectual openness, inquisitiveness, interpretative, analysis, reasoning, precision and accuracy, problem solving. Key content and knowledge: writing, research, technology, English, math, science, social students, world history, arts.
- Ability to evaluate and synthesize vast and varying information and points of view
- Knows how to facilitate their own learning
- Solid reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Integration of content across learning and student performances. Increasing focus on metacognition. Focus on constructivist learning/inquiry
- Meet learning competencies for course students toward multiple pathways

- Skills necessary to learn new information and integrate it with existing knowledge, to think critically, and continue to grow as an individual
- Savvy with digital technology, read fluently with comprehension, write coherently, speak to convey a message, apply inquiry, apply math concepts to real world applications
- Communicate effectively verbally and in writing.

School Vision
- A greater emphasis on practices/student experiences around content
- Professional teachers solely dedicated to developing their craft (no need for second jobs)
- Support for personalized learning
- Teacher professional development to go beyond traditional content knowledge to focus on problem solving and project-based learning
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment developed around college- and career-ready standards (k-12)
- Consistent reporting systems k-12
- Common minimum standards with problem solving expectations, knowledge of other languages, and project-based communication skills
- Less structured, flexible pacing for competency-based learning, longer school say with more "work" time, no homework
- Extended learning opportunities (ELO's) more structured and integrated with other learning
- Facilities that reflect current education specifications for teaching and learning
- Teachers as facilitators for learning
- Allow students the gift of time—do not punish high schools for allowing students to complete in 5 or even 6 years if necessary
- Develop content competencies for our diverse learners
- Flexible schedule, personalized learning, competency based, move on when ready, dual enrollment courses
- Assessment on learning, for learning, and of learning
- Available assessment results as soon as possible
- Tasks define a college level and career level work
- Work-study practices embedded throughout learning
- Project-based learning in place
- Authentic performance-based assessment
- Personalized learning
- Integrated approach to learning to apply skills and knowledge to "real-world" applications
- High quality curriculum with sound pedagogy (effective teachers)
- Focus on growth more than proficiency
- More focus on formative assessment
- Working framed around learning progressions
- Early grouping—instill content and core building concepts. Middle grouping—facilitate growth and expansion to trigger and promote learning. Higher grouping—that will motivate self-growth in interests and skills to ready student for advanced learning or professional trades.
- Competency-based where students move on when ready. No grade level distinctions. Competencies articulated k-12 with performance indicators in a logical learning progression.
- Deeply personalized, open physical spaces, year round, 24 hour, technology-rich with embedded 21st century skills.

Accountability Incentives
- Imbedded
- Feedback to inform instruction

- Adjust corr.
- Provide info to parents
- Simple, clean and easy to understand
- Incentivize systemic school and district approach to student and teacher growth
- Current model—PACE supports vision
- Use district-based benchmark assessments as part of system
- Growth
- Common performance tasks are provided for districts to use as a building block
- Expectations of the use of performance tasks throughout all curriculum areas
- Flexible enough to measure student growth along a k-12 continuum of learning
- Not a one size fits all—use of multiple measures in conjunction with a standardized assessment to allow students multiple ways to demonstrate understanding
- Dropout rates, graduation rates, post-secondary enrollment, common state and local assessment data
- Attends to learning progressions and growth, assesses 21st century skills, rewards growth and incentives for the ends of the bell curve
- Recognize a true baseline competency
- Assessment measures growth and proficiency
- Assessment provides teacher with immediate feedback to inform instruction
- Viewed as relevant and/or useful
- Efficient in time and logistics
- Incentivize readiness, growth model requiring demonstration of skills alongside content knowledge
- System has to be meaningful to all stakeholders
- System has to be valid for a school of 30 and 3000
- Capacity building, group work, pedagogy, systemness
- Accountability should be like a Fitbit for schools. Some required domain and some optional ones.
- Untimed—faster should not equate to better/more competent, etc.

Potential Negative Consequences
- Cautious of sub-groups—how do you differentiate growth for sub-groups
- Measures only proficiency, source of controversy, detracts from instructional time without adding instructional value
- Segregated grouping might not reflect actual student growth
- If punitive in nature—media labels schools even if DOE does not
- Understand all students may not be able to graduate high school in four years
- Schools designated as in need of improvement may not be in need. Efforts and time focused on improvement efforts create problems for positive gains in other areas.
- Look carefully at subgroup definition and size of subgroups make accountability not accurate— autistic students and an learning disabled student acct is quite different. Group changes from year to year.
- Our previous accountability systems have not directly assessed all curriculum areas. Focus has been shifted to reading, math, and then science.
- Constrained to grade level outcomes
- Lead to lack of public support, confusion muddled priorities, misplaced internal priorities
- Incentivize the wrong things
- Too much focus on traditional academic areas (ELA, math). Force every child to take the SAME test with SAME format.